

## **Appropriations Committee Testimony**

**David Olchowski, GKN Aerospace Services Structures Corp.**

**February 15, 2017**

Good afternoon. I am David Olchowski, President and General Manager for GKN Aerospace in Cromwell, CT. We are Tier 1 composites manufacturer, supplying to major aerospace OEM's in CT and elsewhere in the US.

I thank the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to speak here today about the importance of strong fiscal support of UConn. I also thank you for the strong support you have shown in the past. It has absolutely made a difference.

Our business – composites – is a growing and expanding field in Aerospace. Since its incorporation in 2003 with literally a handful of employees, the business has grown to over 170 employees. Over the past 2 years alone our business has grown 28% and our employment has increased >35%. We are on track to double the size of our business and significantly increase our employment over the next 7 years.

We have many UConn alumni on our staff – 11 full-time, 2 interns. But we need more.

With the intent of building a specific composites engineering competency, we have been working with the UConn School of Engineering on student projects and industrial projects over the past several years. These projects are run with the Institute of Materials Science at UConn and initially have covered some of the basic science involved in composites manufacturing. UConn has deployed and hired faculty to support these efforts. Together we are creating a composites engineering curriculum. Our collaborative work on innovative initiatives is breaking new ground in the field of composites manufacturing. In turn, we are creating opportunities for UConn engineering graduates to work and live in CT.

As our business grows, we will have a need for more engineers specifically trained in composites. We want to hire them from UConn. That is at risk. These nascent efforts are the most susceptible to cuts in the current budget environment. It is programs like ours, in their early stages, that are most at risk.

To deliver this promising future, we are all linked together. UConn's success is GKN's success is CT's success. Connecticut and Connecticut's businesses need the engineers and scientists from UConn to solve our technical challenges of the future. They can only do this through continued strong financial support.

Thank you for your past support of UConn. And thank you for the opportunity for me to voice my support for continued strong fiscal support going forward.